

Senate Report Backs Europe Troop Cut Veto

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Strong support came out of the Senate over the weekend for President Johnson's decision against cutting American troops in Europe.

A subcommittee staff study headed by Sen. Henry Jackson, D-Wash., concludes that unilateral American withdrawals would demoralize allies, jeopardize bargaining positions with the Russians, and increase the threat of nuclear war.

"It is hard to see how the West can improve the bargaining position it has worked so long and hard to construct by weakening it—unilaterally," the report says.

Follows Announcement

"If we cut and run from Europe," Jackson said in an accompanying statement, "we will have 'had it' as a great nation. We should retain the basic position of strength we've worked so long and hard to construct, and actively pursue acceptance of gradual and balanced revisions in military forces on both sides of the Iron Curtain."

The report was issued by the Government Operations subcommittee on National Security and International Operations.

infantry-type forces in South Vietnam, military officials said today.

They said these forces should be sufficient to neutralize Communist main force units.

Further increases in U.S. arms strength in Vietnam will be concentrated in support and combat support elements, they said.

These will include more artillery to back up the infantry, more helicopter companies, more ground transportation outfits, more supply handling units and a wide variety of roundout detachments.

The helicopter fleet, key to U.S. ground troops' ability to strike far and wide, will go from the present level of about 2,000 choppers to perhaps 3,200.

The pace of the over-all U.S.

"If changes in force posture are to be made, they should flow from decisions by the council or its defense planning committee and should be executed with a view to minimizing the danger that their significance will be misinterpreted by the Soviet Union—or by allied governments and publics," the subcommittee said.

All alliance members should

report and consult on their policies toward the Communist bloc through the council. Instead of "dramatic erasure" of the division in Europe, the report sees only "steady and progressive erosion" over a long period of time.

The subcommittee also takes issue with the growing body of opinion here and in Europe that allied forces are a "kind of hostage whose destruction would trigger a nuclear response."

"The primary function of NATO's conventional forces, with their vital American component, is to meet a local crisis as effectively as they can, posing the continuous threat that if the crisis continues and enlarges, the risks of escalation continue and enlarge with it—in particular the risks of nuclear war," the report said.

The subcommittee also concludes that "serious risks" would be incurred if American divisions now in Europe were brought home on the condition that they would be rushed back in time of crisis. It rejects the argument that by the early 1970s modern jet transport and communication will make swift interchange feasible.

Such a course, "would be useless against a sizable surprise attack from the East if only because the required airfields would probably be unavailable; it would necessarily make a large crisis out of a small one; it would require a dramatic and perhaps difficult political decision to put American troops back into Europe; it runs the danger that returning too few troops would look irresolute, while returning too many would look belligerent; it might be too slow to prevent a crisis from getting out of control."

... American military presence in Europe," the report concludes, "is still the hard nub of the western deterrent. The chief purpose of the American troop commitment is political: To leave no doubt in Western Europe or in Moscow that the United States would be completely involved from the outset of any move against Western Europe."

buildup has slowed as the leveling process sets in.

About 11,000 men landed South Vietnam last month, compared with 15,000 in January and 27,000 in December.

Total strength Feb. 25 was 415,000. The planned buildup is due to reach about 470,000 by the end of this year.

These projections hinge on the expectation that there will be no dramatic changes in the character of the conflict, officials said.

ing the size of the available draft pool by deferring men out of it.

Clampdown on Deferments

Leaving the question of deferring undergraduate college students open, the President's message implied—and officials confirmed—most other discretionary deferments will be banned except for "extreme hardship" cases. Under strict rules to be applied uniformly throughout the country.

Actually, one official said, when the draft is concentrated on 19-year-olds, in most cases there will be no reason for occupational and "fatherhood" deferments anyway.

Presenting arguments for reversing present procedure to draft the "youngest first" at 19, Johnson said the present "oldest first" policy starting at 25 is undesirable for everyone involved because:

For the youths themselves, it increases the period of uncertainty and interferes with the planning of lives and careers.

For employers, it causes hardships when employees are lost to the draft who have been trained, acquired skills and settled in their jobs.

For the Selective Service system, it proliferates the number of deferment applications and appeals. Claims to dependency and occupational deferments are much more frequent for men over 20.

For the armed forces, it creates problems. The services have found that older recruits are generally less adaptable than are younger ones to the rigors of military training.

While "there is no perfect